6: Santa Cruz E-5 (1940) 1941
SC13 Goajiro SC13

PRIMITIVE MAN
Quarterly Bulletin
of the
Catholic Anthropological Conference

Vol. XIV . January and April, 1941 Nos. 1 and 2

ASPECTS OF THE AVUNCULATE IN THE GUAJIRO CULTURE

ANTONIO SANTA CRUZ
Catholic University of America

THE Guajira peninsula is situated in the northwest corner of Colombia, South America, roughly between the 71° and 73° W. long., and 11° and 12° N. lat. It is rather flat in contour with only some hill ranges in the eastern part. Rainfall is scarce and the vegetation is of a semi-arid type. The region is inhabited by one tribe of Indians, the Arawak-speaking Guajiro. Both culturally and linguistically the Guajira peninsula presents a uniform block.

The present writer visited the territory in the summer of 1940, but due to illness contracted there was forced to cut short his visit. Fairly full data were gathered on all phases of social culture. The present paper deals with certain aspects of one phase only, the avunculate.

The rôle of the maternal uncle is manifold in Guajiro culture, organized as the Guajiro are into maternal sibs. Types of behavior, both prescribed and unformalized, vary, depending on the seniority of both uncle and nephew, but not on that of niece. In this paper we shall be concerned for the most part with the prescribed and voluntary relations between the oldest brother of a given woman and her eldest son, and between this oldest brother and his sisters' daughters. Other relations not involving these specified kin will be touched upon only incidentally for illustrative purposes.

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

One day we met three slave-workers. They were sitting on a hillside gnawing at roast goat's feet. Talking with them we discovered that they had to serve their master without wages. Must they do so all their lives? we asked. Perhaps not, but they were bound to work for him till certain debts and obligations had been paid off, and these seemed very complicated and vague.

The real slaves for life are the prisoners taken in war. Thus there are various forms of slavery in Guajira. It is, of course, an ancient phenomenon, of which the whites would seem to have taken advantage rather than to have combatted.

Slavery is a form of punishment. Formerly it was only conquered people and prisoners of war who were kept as slaves. This was usual among several Indian peoples, especially the Aruaks, to which group the Guajiro belong. With them slavery has been systematized.

Let us see how it is that someone becomes a slave. If an Indian has been insulted or killed, his clan demands compensation. If this is not paid, war breaks out between the two clans and those taken prisoner are treated as slaves without further ado. The Indians, however, never begin a war for the purpose of obtaining slaves. The slaves are reckoned as part of the damages, and they and the possessions of the conquered are divided among the victors according to certain principles. The eldest maternal uncle, mother, nephew, brothers and the leader of the fighting are entitled to damages; and if there is enough, the leader of the warriors will usually distribute some of the booty to his nearest relatives, mother, sisters, and maternal aunts. All the property of the enslaved prisoners-of-war passes into the hands of the victors: their pastures, water-holes, cattle, utensils, clothing, ornaments.

Slaves are the property of their masters, who can do with them as they see fit; sell them, give them away, kill them or use their labour and, if they are women, have intercourse with them as they may desire. The same goes for the men, if their master is a homosexual, as is not unusual in Guajira. The owner's unmarried sons or nephews also con-

8:Armstrong & Métraux E-4 (no date) 1948
SC13 Goajiro SC13

During the Colonial Period, the *Goajiro* were hostile toward the Spaniards. After 1830, however, as a result of better treatment from the Whites, thanks in part to the efforts of Juan MacPherson, they become more friendly. Present authorities in the *Goajiro* region merely regulate frontier traffic.

The attempts by the Capuchin Fathers to alter their ways of life have been unsuccessful. Except for the thin Catholic veneer, noticeable in baptismal rites and Spanish names, *Goajiro* social life seems to have been little affected by centuries of contact with Hispanic culture. Foreign influence is more apparent materially in iron implements, utensils, guns, textiles, and ornaments. All the domestic animals are of Spanish origin.

As a result of tuberculosis, smallpox, and venereal disease, the *Goajiro* are gradually dying out, and the population estimates found in the literature have become smaller and smaller, the most recent indicating a scant 18,000.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The *Goajiro* are usually described as aggressive and untrustworthy, of medium or small stature (cf. J. A. Mason, 1926, pp. 39, 52), copper colored, with jet-black hair, dark eyes rather obliquely set, a broad and blunt nose, and a large mouth (pl. 72, *bottom, right*). Within the tribes there are physical differences which seem to correspond with social status, the lower classes being smaller and more Indian in appearance, while those of higher rank are more often of a greater stature, with curlier hair and larger noses.

LANGUAGE

The *Goajiro* language belongs to the *Arawakan* family. There is, however, no good analysis of it. A grammar, "replete with errors" according to Simons, was published by Rafael Caledon in 1878. Various word lists have been published from time to time.

CULTURE

SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

Farming.—The *Goajiro* have a poor opinion of agriculture, and only the poorer sibs practice it. The one fertile part of the peninsula is near Punta Espada. Here the land is well cultivated, and plantains, maguey, onions, coca, sugarcane, and grain are grown. Tobacco, bananas, maize, gourds, manioc, sweetpotatoes, millet, beans, and watermelons also are raised. Those who own cattle grow only small patches of quick-maturing corn for the purpose of making chicha beer.

Hunting, fishing, and gathering.—Hunting, fishing, and gathering occupy a minor place. Deer, armadillos, land tortoises, and rabbits are